SEATTLE PUBLIC UTILITIES CONTRACTED REHABILITATION OPTIMIZATION PROGRAM

CLIENT
Seattle Public Utilities

LOCATION
Seattle, WA

DURATION
24 months

ROLE
Technical Lead

BUDGET
$80,000

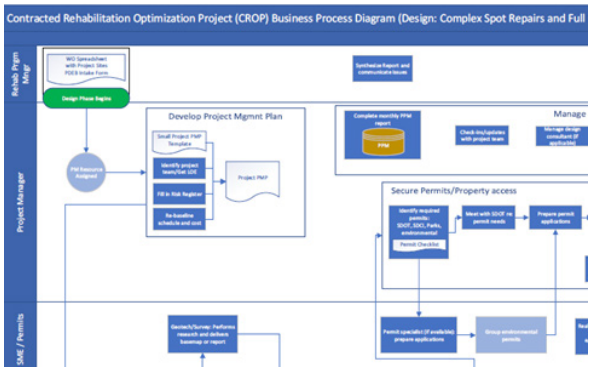
COMPLETED
April 2020

City of Seattle

With over 1,400 miles of sewer collection pipe and an average system age of over 80 years, Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) is in a growing battle against system deterioration. The aging system requires increased levels of repair. The City has responded by tripling the size of its rehabilitation program in a short, three-year, time horizon. Immediately SPU realized a new challenge; how does the Utility quickly, efficiently, and effectively deliver on this expanded program?

In partnership with EMA Inc., Blue Cypress is tasked with assessing the program for delivering contracted rehabilitation work. The project is a case-study in cross-organizational business process improvement. From project and risk identification to engineering and construction, Blue Cypress gathered key organizational stakeholders to map out existing business processes and determine the necessary improvements and changes that would ensure the successful and efficient delivery of contracted rehabilitation.

One key success factor for this project was the meaningful participation of key process players from across the organization. This led to high-impact improvement recommendations that affect the entire process and help ensure efficient work delivery.

A second key success factor was the ability of the group to consider external challenges while assessing business processes and the data and communication needs of these external entities. One significant challenge in the delivery of utility rehabilitation projects is the effective communication of needs (permitting, utility conflicts, etc.) to other organizations; particularly the transportation department. One of the main recommendations of this process is an improved process for communicating and detailing project needs across organizations.

The end result of this project is a prioritized list of improvement actions that will lead to a desired "to-be" business process as well as a framework and support mechanism for delivering on these action items.